

ELECTION MONITOR NO. 39

RECENT SUBMISSIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES' MEMBERS LISTS TO UEC

The following parties have submitted the lists of their party members to the UEC:

1. Ethnic National Development Party (ENDP) - 30 August 2010 (Date Submitted)¹
2. Inn National Development Party - 27 August 2010 (Date Submitted)²
3. Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party - 1 September 2010(Date Submitted)³

To date, of the 42 parties that have been granted permission to register as political parties, 33 have submitted their party members lists to the UEC within the prescribed period.

PARTIES CONSULT TO AVOID OVERLAP

Leaders of the National Democratic Force (NDF), Democratic Party (Myanmar) and Union Democratic Party (UDP) have said by cooperating they are trying to make the most of their limited time and money. "We have not formed an alliance. We're just consulting to avoid needless confrontation between parties that share a common belief in democracy and to avoid spreading the votes around amongst each other and making each other too weak to be elected," said U Khin Maung Swe, one of the founders of the NDF.⁴

NDF URGES CITIZENS TO VOTE

At the opening ceremony of its party offices on 22 August in North Okkalapa, Rangoon Division, NDF party Vice-Chairman Dr. Than Win urged those present to cast their votes boldly and instigate change. He said the international community was also gradually recognising the important role the NDF was playing, but admitted the party faced an uphill battle to be successful. The party office opening followed similar ceremonies in Mandalay, Gangaw in Magway and Paletwa in Chin State earlier this month. Party founder U Khin Maung Swe said at the ceremony that opening branch offices had taken a back seat to other activities in recent weeks, such as registering candidates before the 30 August deadline. He said the party would soon open an office in Labutta Township, Ayeyarwady Division. "Because the National Democratic Force has only been running for a short period of time, we have other things to do and can't afford to open many offices. The NDF will contest about 100 constituencies across the country, including 20 in Yangon Region."⁵

KAYIN PARTY SEEKS END TO CONFLICT

Leaders of a Kayin State-based political party say they hope participation in the 7 November election will help bring about an end to decades of ethnic conflict. U Khin Maung Myint, Chairman of the Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party, said that the party would focus on bringing "peace and prosperity" to Kayin State. "We don't want war, we only want peace," he added. "I think everyone in Kayin State is hoping for peace" as a result of the election." Ethnic conflict has ravaged the region since Kayin soldiers took up arms up against the government shortly after independence in 1948. The Karen National Liberation Army, the armed wing of the Karen National Union, has been one of the few ethnic armies to resist signing a ceasefire agreement with the government. "A lot of what happens in the future will depend on the new government. An important factor will be ensuring stability during the election period," according to U Khin Maung Myint. "Under the law we need to form a party if we are to practise politics for the Kayin people. We like this approach, rather than armed conflict, to solving problems." He said most of the Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party's founding members have a background in non-government organisations and civil society groups and range from 20 to 60 years of age. The Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party will contest constituencies in all seven townships of Kayin State, as well as Kyaikmayaw in neighbouring Mon State, and expects to field more than 30 candidates altogether.⁶

¹ Political parties submit lists of party members to UEC - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-08-31.pdf> (NLM) 31 August 2010

² Political parties submit lists of party members to UEC - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-08-28.pdf> (NLM) 28 August 2010

³ Political parties submit lists of party members to UEC - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-09-02.pdf> (NLM) 2 September 2010

⁴ Parties consult to avoid overlap - <http://www.mmtimes.com/2010/news/538/news008.html> (Myanmar Times) 30 August 2010

⁵ NDF urges citizens to vote - <http://www.mmtimes.com/2010/news/538/news022.html> (Myanmar Times) 30 August 2010

⁶ Kayin party seeks end to conflict - <http://www.mmtimes.com/2010/news/538/news011.html> (Myanmar Times) 30 August 2010

UEC CHAIRMAN MEETS SUB-COMMISSION MEMBERS IN RAKHINE STATE

The meeting between the Chairman of the UEC and state, district, township, ward and village sub-commission members in Rakhine State took place at City Hall in Sittway on 9 August. UEC Chairman U Thein Soe first made a speech, and U Aung Mya, Chairman of Rakhine State Sub-commission, Secretary U Kyaw Myint, and district and township sub-commission chairmen reported on electoral processes. The meeting ended with a concluding remark by the Chairman U Thein Soe.⁷

UEC, REGION/STATE/DISTRICT ELECTION COMMISSIONS MEET

UEC Chairman U Thein Soe met secretaries of Region/State/ District Election commissions at the coordination meeting at UEC offices on 1 September. In his address, Chairman U Thein Soe said that the purpose of the meeting was to coordinate electoral processes in order to successfully hold a free and fair election and stressed the need to prepare the voting roll and list of candidates and constituencies in line with the prescribed Electoral laws and regulations. He pointed out that it is necessary to set up five polling booths for each Hluttaw for the convenience of voters enabling them to cast votes in time and emphasized the need to increase the number of the members in polling stations. In conclusion, he urged those present to coordinate with members of the UEC and responsible officials from the respective Regions and States on data. Later, the secretaries of Region/State/District Election Commissions took part in discussions and coordinated with members of UEC on electoral process. The UEC Chairman ended the meeting with the concluding remarks.⁸

ELECTORAL WORK COURSE ORGANIZED IN THANLYIN AND KAYAN TOWNSHIP, RANGOON DIVISION

Two electoral work courses for polling station officers, deputy polling station officers and members were held in Thanlyin⁹ and Kayan¹⁰ Townships in Rangoon Division on 30 August and 1 September respectively. Officials from the respective Election Sub-commissions were present on the occasions and gave briefings and practical demonstration sessions on the duties of polling station officers, deputy polling station officers and members to those attending the courses.

ANALYSIS

The final date for submission for the lists of the names candidates for the constituencies for the respective Hluttaws set for 30 August has passed. A total of 33 parties met the deadline. There has been no official announcement about independent candidates.

The parties will now have to move into the second phase of having their candidates scrutinized between the 6 and 10 September as prescribed by Notification No. 90/2010 on 13 August 2010. The UEC gave the parties a very short time-frame in which to submit candidates (15-30 August). Many parties that failed to meet the deadline are now faced with the prospect of being eliminated from the electoral process. This will give the junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) a better advantage in many areas.

The scrutinizing of candidates will bring more casualties as would-be candidates, especially from opposition parties, are eliminated.

The renewed tension mounting in the border regions¹¹ coupled with the growing dissatisfaction against the regime's handling of the election process do not bode well for a smooth election.

⁷ UEC Chairman meets subcommission members in Rakhine state - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-08-29.pdf> (NLM) 29 August 2010

⁸ UEC, Region/State/District Election commissions meet - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-09-02.pdf> (NLM) 2 September 2010

⁹ Electoral Work Course organized in Thanlyin Township - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-08-31.pdf> (NLM) 31 August 2010

¹⁰ Electoral Work Course opens in Kayan Township - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs09/NLM2010-09-02.pdf> (NLM) 2 September 2010

¹¹ The SPDC at the end of August suddenly delivered an ultimatum to the ethnic ceasefire groups that had not agreed to being transformed into Border Guard Forces that they have to surrender their arms by 1 September or be considered enemies of the State. The groups include the Kachin Independence Organization, United War State Army, Shan State Army – North, National Democratic Alliance Army, and the New Mon State Party.